Circle 9

This is the circle of traitors.

☼ ► Dante divides circle 9, the circle of treachery--defined in *Inferno* 11 as fraudulent acts between individuals who share special bonds of love and trust (61-6)--into four regions. **Caina** is named after the biblical Cain (first child of Adam and Eve), who slew his brother Abel out of envy after God showed appreciation for Abel's sacrificial offering but not Cain's (Genesis 4:1-17); condemned to a vagabond existence, Cain later built a city (named after his son, Henoch) that for certain Christian theologians--notably Augustine (*City of God*, book 15)--represented the evils of the earthly city. In the circle of the lustful, Francesca identified her husband (Gianciotto)--who murdered her and Paolo (Gianciotto's brother)--as a future inhabitant of Caina (*Inf.* 5.107). Dante's attention is here drawn to two brothers, the ghibelline Napoleone and the guelph Alessandro, who murdered one another because of a dispute over their inheritance (*Inf.* 32.55-60).

The second region, **Antenora**, is named for the Trojan prince Antenor. While the classical sources--notably Homer's *Iliad*--present Antenor in a positive (or at least neutral) light as one in favor of returning Helen to the Greeks for the good of Troy, medieval versions--histories, commentaries, and romances--view him as a "treacherous Judas" who plots with the Greeks to destroy the city. Dante places in this region those who betrayed their political party or their homeland.

In the third zone of circle 9 suffer those who betrayed friends or guests. **Ptolomea** is named after one or both of the following: Ptolemy, the captain of Jericho, honored his father-in-law, the high priest Simon Maccabee, and two of Simon's sons with a great feast and then murdered them (1 Maccabees 16:11-17); Ptolemy XII, brother of Cleopatra, arranged that the Roman general Pompey--seeking refuge following his defeat at the battle of Pharsalia (48 B.C.E.)--be murdered as soon as he stepped ashore. Dante displays his abhorrence of such crimes by devising a special rule for those who betray their guests: their souls descend immediately to hell and their living bodies are possessed by demons when they commit these acts (*Inf.* 33.121-6).

Judecca, named after the apostle who betrayed Jesus (Judas Iscariot), is the innermost zone of the ninth and final circle of hell. The term also hints at a manifestation of Christian prejudice--which Dante certainly shares--against Judaism and Jews in the Middle Ages: it alludes to the names--*Iudeca, Judaica*--for the area within certain cities (e.g., Venice) where Jews were forced to live, apart from the Christian population. Together with Judas in this region of hell are others who, by betraying their masters or benefactors, committed crimes with great historical and societal consequences. Completely covered by the ice--like "straw in glass"--the shades are locked in various postures with no mobility or sound whatsoever (*Inf.* 34.10-15). *(Source:http://danteworlds.laits.utexas.edu/circle9.html#treachery)*

Rings of Circle 9

1) **Caïna**-- this round is named after Cain, who killed his own brother in the first act of murder (*Gen.* 4:8).
    1) **Traitors to their Kindred**: they have their necks and heads out of the ice and are allowed to bow their heads, allowing some protection from the freezing wind. Here Dante sees the brothers Alessandro and Napoleone degli Alberti, who killed each other over their inheritance and their politics some time between 1282 and 1286. Camiscion de' Pazzi, a Ghibelline who murdered his kinsman Ubertino, identifies several other sinners: Mordred (traitorous nephew of King Arthur); Vanni de' Cancellieri, nicknamed Focaccia (a White Guelph of Pistoia who killed his cousin, Detto de' Cancellieri); and Sassol Mascheroni of the noble Toschi family of Florence (murdered a relative). Camiscion is aware that, in July 1302, his relative Carlino de' Pazzi would accept a bribe to surrender the Castle of Piantravigne to the Blacks, betraying the Whites. As a traitor to his party, Carlino belongs in

Antenora, the next circle down – his greater sin will make Camiscion look virtuous by comparison.

2) **Antenora**: the second round is named after Antenor, a Trojan soldier who betrayed his city to the Greeks.
    1) **Traitors to their Country**: those who committed treason against political entities (parties, cities, or countries) have their heads above the ice, but they cannot bend their necks. Dante accidentally kicks the head of Bocca degli Abati, a traitorous Guelph of Florence, and then proceeds to treat him more savagely than any other soul he has thus far met. Also punished in this level are Buoso da Duera (Ghibelline leader bribed by the French to betray Manfred, King of Naples), Tesauro dei Beccheria (a Ghibelline of Pavia; beheaded by the Florentine Guelphs for treason in 1258), Gianni de' Soldanieri (noble Florentine Ghibelline who joined with the Guelphs after Manfred's death in 1266), Ganelonn (betrayed the rear guard o Charlemagne to the Muslims at Roncesvalles, according to the French epic poem The Song of Roland), and Tebaldello de' Zambrasi of Faenza (a Ghibelline who turned his city over to the Bolognese Guelphs on Nov. 13, 1280). The Poets then see two heads frozen in one hole, one gnawing the nape of the other's neck.

3) **Ptolomaea**: the third region of Cocytus is named after Ptolemy, who invited his father-in-law Simon Maccabaeus and his sons to a banquet and then killed them (1 *Maccabees* 16).

    1) **Traitors to their Guests** lie supine in the ice while their tears freeze in their eye sockets, sealing them with small visors of crystal – even the comfort of weeping is denied them. Dante encounters Fra Alberigo, one of the Jovial Friars and a native of Faenza, who asks Dante to remove the visor of ice from his eyes. In 1285, Alberigo invited his opponents, Manfred (his brother) and Alberghetto (Manfred's son), to a banquet at which his men murdered the dinner guests. He explains that often a living person's soul falls to Ptolomea before he dies ("before dark Atropos has cut their thread"[101]). Then, on earth, a demon inhabits the body until the body's natural death. Fra Alberigo's sin is identical in kind to that of Branca d'Oria, a Genoese Ghibelline who, in 1275, invited his father-in-law, Michel Zanche (seen in the Eighth Circle, Bolgia 5) and had him cut to pieces. Branca (that is, his earthly body) did not die until 1325, but his soul, together with that of his nephew who assisted in his treachery, fell to Ptolomaea before Michel Zanche's soul arrived at the *bolgia* of the Barrators. Dante leaves without keeping his promise to clear Fra Alberigo's eyes of ice ("And yet I did not open them for him; / and it was courtesy to show him rudeness").

4) **Judecca**: the fourth division of Cocytus, named for Judas Iscariot.

    1) **Traitors to their Lords and Benefactors.** Upon entry into this round, Virgil says "*Vexilla regis prodeunt inferni*" ("The banners of the King of Hell draw closer"). Judecca is completely silent: all of the sinners are fully encapsulated in ice, distorted and twisted in every conceivable position. The sinners present an image of utter immobility: it is impossible to talk with any of them, so Dante and Virgil quickly move on to the centre of Hell.

5) Centre of Hell

1) In the very centre of Hell, condemned for committing the ultimate sin (personal treachery against God), is the Devil, referred to by Virgil as Dis (the Roman god of the underworld; the name "Dis" was often used for Pluto in antiquity, such as in Virgil's *Aeneid*). The arch-traitor, Luciferwas once held by God to be fairest of the angels before his pride led him to rebel against God, resulting in his expulsion from Heaven. Lucifer is a giant, terrifying beast trapped waist-deep in the ice, fixed and suffering. He has three faces, each a different color:

one red (the middle), one a pale yellow (the right), and one black (the left):

... he had three faces: one in front bloodred;
and then another two that, just above
the midpoint of each shoulder, joined the first;
and at the crown, all three were reattached;
the right looked somewhat yellow, somewhat white;
the left in its appearance was like those

who come from where the Nile, descending, flows.

(COURTESY OF WIKIPEDIA)

Giants

The Giants physically connect circles 8 and 9: standing on the floor of circle 9--or perhaps on a ledge above the bottom of hell--the upper halves of their huge bodies tower over the inner edge of circle 8. From a distance, in fact, Dante initially mistakes the Giants for actual towers (*Inf.* 31.19-45). Anticipating the even larger figure of Lucifer, Dante's Giants--drawn from both biblical and classical stories--are archetypal examples of defiant rebels. **Nimrod**, described in the Bible as a "stout hunter before the Lord" (Genesis 10:9), was viewed as a Giant in the medieval tradition that Dante follows. According to the biblical account, people in the region ruled by Nimrod--Babylon and other cities in the land of Sennaar--plan to build a tower that will reach to heaven; God shows his displeasure by scattering the people and destroying the unity of their language so they will no longer understand one another's speech (Genesis 11:1-9). Dante, following tradition, places the blame for this linguistic confusion on Nimrod, whose own language is now as incomprehensible to others as their languages are to him (*Inf.* 31.67-9; 76-81). In his physical description of Nimrod, Dante reinforces the association of the Giants with the ruinous consequences of pride: 1) comparing the size of Nimrod's face to the pine cone at St. Peter's in Rome (*Inf.*31.58-60), Dante perhaps means to draw an unflattering parallel with the current pope, Boniface VIII; 2) the word Dante uses--*perizoma*--to convey how the inner bank of circle 8 covers the lower half of the Giants' bodies like an "apron" (*Inf.* 31.61-2) is an unusual word (of Greek origin) likely familiar to Dante's readers from a biblical verse describing the shame of Adam and Eve following their disobedience in the Garden of Eden: "And the eyes of them both were opened: and when they perceived themselves to be naked, they sewed together fig leaves, and made themselves aprons [*perizomata*]" (Genesis 3:7).

In their passage from circle 8 to circle 9, Dante and Virgil view two other Giants, both from the classical tradition. **Ephialtes** was one of the Giants who fought against Jove and the other Olympian gods (*Inf.* 31.91-6). Ephialtes and his twin brother Otus (they were sons of Neptune and Iphimedia, wife of the giant Aloeus), attempted to scale Mount Olympus and dethrone the gods by stacking Mount Pelion on top of Mount Ossa in Macedonia (*Aen.* 6.582-4); they were killed, according to Servius' well known medieval commentary on the *Aeneid*, with arrows shot by Apollo and Diana. Note Ephialtes' reaction to Virgil's statement that another Giant--Briareus--has an even more ferocious appearance (*Inf.* 31.106-11). Like the other Giants who challenged the gods, Ephialtes is immobilized by chains in Dante's hell. **Antaeus**, who can speak, is probably unfettered because he was born after his brothers waged war against the gods. He is therefore able to lift Dante and Virgil and deposit them on the floor of the ninth and final circle of hell (*Inf.* 31.130-45). To secure this assistance, Virgil entices Antaeus with the prospect of continued fame (upon Dante's return to the world) based on the Giant's formidable reputation. Here Dante's source is Lucan, who recounts how Antaeus, a fearsome offspring of Earth whose strength was replenished from contact with his mother, feasted on lions and slaughtered farmers

and travelers around his cavernous dwelling in North Africa until he met his match in Hercules. The hero and the Giant engaged in a wrestling contest, which Hercules finally won by lifting Antaeus off the ground and squeezing him to death (*Pharsalia* 4.593-653). The Giant's fatal encounter with Hercules is recalled not by Virgil in his plea for Antaeus' help (*Inf.* 31.115-29) but by the narrator (31.132). Virgil, however, is sure to reiterate Lucan's suggestion that the Giants might in fact have defeated the gods had Antaeus been present at the battle of Phlegra (31.119-21; see also *Inf.* 14.58). *(Source: http://danteworlds.laits.utexas.edu/circle9.html#giants)*

More Giants (Briareus, Tityus, Typhon)

Although Dante and Virgil do not visit them, three more towering Giants are named in *Inferno* 31. **Briareus**, whom Virgil describes as equal in size to--but even more terrifying than--Ephialtes (*Inf.* 31.103-5), appears in Virgil's epic as a monster said to have one hundred arms and hands, with fire burning in his fifty mouths and chests; he thus wielded fifty shields and swords to defend himself against Jove's thunderbolts (*Aen.* 6.287; 10.565-8). Statius merely describes Briareus as immense (*Thebaid* 2.596). Repeating Lucan's coupling of Tityus and Typhon as Giants inferior to Antaeus (*Pharsalia* 4.595-6), Virgil appeals to Antaeus' pride by "threatening" to go to them if Antaeus will not provide a lift down to circle 9 (*Inf.* 31.124-6). **Tityus** is well represented in classical literature as a Giant whose attempted rape of Latona (mother of Apollo and Diana) earns him a gruesome fate in the underworld: a vulture continuously feeds on Tityus' immortal liver (*Aen.* 6.595-600; *Met.* 4.457-8). **Typhon**was struck down by Jove's lightning bolts and, depending on the version, buried under Mount Etna in Sicily (and thus causing occasional volcanic eruptions: *Met.* 5.318-58) or under the Island of Ischia in the Bay of Naples (*Aen.* 9.715-6). *(Source: http://danteworlds.laits.utexas.edu/circle9.html#more)*

►►► Dante feels that he cannot adequately express the grim terror of what he and Virgil see next, but he states that he will nevertheless make an attempt. Walking past the giant's feet, the two come upon a vast frozen lake, as clear as glass—Cocytus. In the ice, souls stand frozen up to their heads, their teeth chattering. The First Ring of the Ninth Circle of Hell is called Caina (after Cain, who, as Genesis recounts, slew his brother, Abel), where traitors to their kin receive their punishment. Virgil and Dante see twins frozen face to face, butting their heads against each other in rage. Walking farther, Dante accidentally kicks one of the souls in the cheek. Leaning down to apologize, he thinks he recognizes the face—it turns out to belong to Bocca degli Abati, an Italian traitor. Dante threatens Bocca and tears out some of his hair before leaving him in the ice. Virgil and Dante progress to the Second Ring, Antenora, which contains those who betrayed their homeland or party. Continuing across the lake, Dante is horrified to see one sinner gnawing at another's head from behind. He inquires into the sin that warranted such cruelty, stating that he might be able to spread the gnawing sinner's good name on Earth. *(Source: Sparknotes)*

Cocytus

Dante calls circle 9, a frozen lake, Cocytus (from Greek, meaning "to lament"). One of the rivers in the classical underworld, Cocytus is described by Virgil as a dark, deep pool of water that encircles a forest and into which pours sand spewed from a torrid whirlpool (*Aen.* 6.131-2; 6.296-7; 6.323). In the Vulgate (the Latin Bible), Cocytus designates the valley (or torrent) of death that receives the wicked, even--and especially--those who have prospered in the world (Job 21:33). *(Source: http://danteworlds.laits.utexas.edu/circle9.html#cocytus)*

Bocca degli Abati

Dante certainly feels no remorse for kicking a shade hard in the face once he learns the identity of the political traitor (*Inf.* 32.73-8). The offended shade immediately piques Dante's interest by alluding to Montaperti (near Siena), site of the legendary battle (1260) in which Florentine guelphs were routed by ghibelline forces that included, among exiles from Florence, Farinata degli Uberti. The shade's identity remains concealed, even as Dante tries to elicit it by tearing out chunks of his hair, until another traitor in the ice calls out the wretch's name: Bocca promptly lives up to his name (*bocca* means "mouth") by identifying the informer along with four other traitors to political party or homeland (*Inf.* 32.112-23). Bocca degli Abati belonged to a ghibelline family that remained in Florence after other ghibellines were banished in 1258 for their role in a foiled plot. Pretending to fight on the side of the guelphs (as part of the cavalry), Bocca betrayed his guelph countrymen at a decisive moment in the battle--as German mercenary troops attacked in support of the Tuscan ghibellines--by cutting off the hand of the guelph standard-bearer. Demoralized by Bocca's treachery and the loss of their flag, the guelphs panicked and were roundly defeated. *(Source: http://danteworlds.laits.utexas.edu/circle9.html#bocca)*

►►► The sinner raises himself from his gnawing and declares that in life he was Count Ugolino; the man whose head he chews was Archbishop Ruggieri. Both men lived in Pisa, and the archbishop, a traitor himself, had imprisoned Ugolino and his sons as traitors. He denied them food, and when the sons died, Ugolino, in his hunger, was driven to eat the flesh of their corpses. Dante now rails against Pisa, a community known for its scandal but that nevertheless has remained unpunished on Earth. He and Virgil then pass to the Third Ring, Ptolomea, which houses those who betrayed their guests. The souls here lie on their backs in the frozen lake, with only their faces poking out of the ice. Dante feels a cold wind sweeping across the lake, and Virgil tells him that they will soon behold its source. The poets react with particular horror at the sight of the next two souls in the Third Ring, those of Fra Alberigo and Branca d'Oria. Although these individuals have not yet died on Earth, their crimes were so great that their souls were obliged to enter Hell before their time; devils occupy their living bodies aboveground. After leaving these shades, Virgil and Dante approach the Fourth Ring of the Ninth Circle of Hell, the very bottom of the pit. *(Source: Sparknotes)*

Ugolino and Ruggieri

There is perhaps no more grisly scene in all the *Inferno* than Dante's depiction of Ugolino eating the back of Ruggieri's head like a dog using its strong teeth to gnaw a bone (*Inf.* 32.124-32; 33.76-8). Ugolino's story, the longest single speech by one of the damned, is Dante's final dramatic representation in the *Inferno* of humankind's capacity for evil and cruelty. Aimed at explaining the scene of cannibalism in hell, Ugolino's story is all the more powerful because the speaker makes no attempt to exonerate himself of the crime--political treachery--for which he is condemned to eternal damnation. He instead wishes to defame his enemy and elicit compassion from his audience by recounting the brutal manner in which he and his innocent children were killed.

Count Ugolino della Gherardesca earned his place in **Antenora**--the realm of political traitors--for a series of betrayals against Pisa and her political leadership. Dante mentions only the reputed act of treason that eventually led to Ugolino's downfall: in an effort to appease hostile and powerful guelph forces in Tuscany, Ugolino ceded Pisan castles to Florence and Lucca in 1285 (*Inf.* 33.85-6). However, early commentators and chroniclers describe other--even more damning--examples of shifting allegiances and betrayals in the long political life of Count Ugolino. Born into a prominent ghibelline family in Pisa, Ugolino switched to the guelph side following their ascendancy in Tuscan politics and tried to install a guelph government in Pisa in 1274-5. Unsuccessful in this attempt, he was imprisoned

and later exiled. In 1284, several years after his return, Ugolino led Pisan forces in a naval battle against rival Genoa; despite his defeat, Ugolino was elected *podestà* (political head) of Pisa and his guelph grandson, Nino Visconti, soon joined him in power as "captain of the people." It was in this period that Ugolino, out of political expediency, ceded the Pisan castles to Lucca and Florence, a decision that caused a rift between him and his grandson and between their guelph followers. Taking advantage of resurgent ghibelline fortunes in Tuscany, Ugolino connived with the Pisan ghibellines, led by the Archbishop Ruggieri degli Ubaldini; Ugolino agreed to ghibelline demands that his grandson Nino be driven from the city, an order that was carried out--with Ugolino purposefully absent from the city--in 1288. The traitor, however, was then himself betrayed: upon Ugolino's return to Pisa, Ruggieri incited the public against him (by cleverly exploiting Ugolino's previous "betrayal of the castles") and had the count--along with two sons (Gaddo and Uguiccione) and two grandsons (Anselmo and Brigata)--arrested and imprisoned. They were held in the tower for eight months until, with a change in the ghibelline leadership of Pisa, it was decided to nail shut the door to the tower and to throw the key into the Arno. They starved to death, as Dante's Ugolino recalls, in a matter of days (*Inf.* 33.67-75) *(Source: http://danteworlds.laits.utexas.edu/circle9.html#ugolino)*

Fra Alberigo

Dante cleverly tricks a shade into revealing his identity by making a devious deal (*Inf.* 33.109-17): if he doesn't relieve the traitor's suffering (by removing ice--frozen tears--from the traitor's face) in exchange for this information, Dante says he should be sent to the very bottom of hell! Dante thus learns that the soul of Fra Alberigo is in hell even as his body is still alive on earth in 1300, the year of the journey (he is thought to have died in 1307). Drawing Dante's attention to the shade of Branca Doria (who will actually live another twenty-five years), Alberigo explains that the souls of those who betray their guests descend immediately to Ptolomea as their bodies are possessed by demons (*Inf.* 33.124-47). Fra Alberigo, of the ruling guelph family of Faenza (near Ravenna), was a Jovial Friar--a religious order established with the goal of making peace (in families and cities) but soon better known for decadence and corruption. A close relative, Manfred, plotted against Alberigo for political power; as a result of this dispute, Manfred struck Alberigo, whose cruel response well earned him a place among the traitors in hell. Pretending that the altercation was forgotten, Alberigo invited Manfred and his son to a sumptuous banquet; when, at the end of the meal, the host gave the signal ("Bring the fruit!"), armed servants emerged from behind a curtain and slaughtered the guests, much to the delight of Alberigo. *(Source: http://danteworlds.laits.utexas.edu/circle9.html#fra)*

►The poets react with particular horror at the sight of the next two souls in the Third Ring, those of Fra Alberigo and Branca d'Oria. Although these individuals have not yet died on Earth, their crimes were so great that their souls were obliged to enter Hell before their time; devils occupy their living bodies aboveground. After leaving these shades, Virgil and Dante approach the Fourth Ring of the Ninth Circle of Hell, the very bottom of the pit. *(Source: Sparknotes)*

►►►Still journeying toward the center of the Ninth Circle of Hell, Dante becomes aware of a great shape in the distance, hidden by the fog. Right under his feet, however, he notices sinners completely covered in ice, sometimes several feet deep, contorted into various positions. These souls constitute the most evil of all sinners—the Traitors to their Benefactors. Their part of Hell, the Fourth Ring of the Ninth Circle, is called Judecca.

Dante and Virgil advance toward the giant, mist-shrouded shape. As they approach through the fog, they behold its true form. The sight unnerves Dante to such an extent that he knows not whether he

is alive or dead. The figure is Lucifer, Dis, Satan—no one name does justice to his terrible nature. The size of his arms alone exceeds all of the giants of the Eighth Circle of Hell put together. He stands in the icy lake, his torso rising above the surface. Gazing upward, Dante sees that Lucifer has three horrible faces, one looking straight ahead and the others looking back over his shoulders. Beneath each head rises a set of wings, which wave back and forth, creating the icy winds that keep Cocytus frozen.

Each of Lucifer's mouths holds a sinner—the three greatest sinners of human history, all Traitors to a Benefactor. In the center mouth dangles Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Christ. In the left and right mouths hang Brutus and Cassius, who murdered Julius Caesar in the Roman Senate. Brutus and Cassius appear with their heads out, but Judas is lodged headfirst; only his twitching legs protrude. The mouths chew their victims, constantly tearing the traitors to pieces but never killing them. Virgil tells Dante that they have now seen all of Hell and must leave at once.

Putting Dante on his back, Virgil performs a startling feat. He avoids the flapping wings and climbs onto Lucifer's body, gripping the Devil's frozen tufts of hair and lowering himself and his companion down. Underneath Cocytus, they reach Lucifer's waist, and here Virgil slowly turns himself around, climbing back upward. However, Dante notes with amazement that Lucifer's legs now rise above them, his head below. Virgil explains that they have just passed the center of the Earth: when Lucifer fell from Heaven, he plunged headfirst into the planet; his body stuck here in the center. According to Virgil, the impact caused the lands of the Southern Hemisphere to retreat to the North, leaving only the Mountain of Purgatory in the water of the South. Dante and Virgil climb a long path through this hemisphere, until they finally emerge to see the stars again on the opposite end of the Earth from where they began. *(Source: Sparknotes)*

Lucifer (with Brutus, Judas, & Cassius)

Lucifer, Satan, Dis, Beelzebub--Dante throws every name in the book at the Devil, once the most beautiful angel (Lucifer means "light-bearer") then--following his rebellion against God--the source of evil and sorrow in the world, beginning with his corruption of Eve and Adam in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). Dante's Lucifer is a parodic composite of his wickedness and the divine powers that punish him in hell. As ugly as he once was beautiful, Lucifer is the wretched emperor of hell, whose tremendous size (he dwarfs even the Giants) stands in contrast with his limited powers: his flapping wings generate the wind that keeps the lake frozen and his three mouths chew on the shade-bodies of three arch-traitors, the gore mixing with tears gushing from Lucifer's three sets of eyes (*Inf.* 34.53-7). Lucifer's three faces--each a different color (red, whitish-yellow, black)--parody the doctrine of the Trinity: three complete persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) in one divine nature--the Divine Power, Highest Wisdom, and Primal Love that created the Gate of Hell and, by extension, the entire realm of eternal damnation. With the top half of his body towering over the ice, Lucifer resembles the Giants and other half-visible figures; after Dante and Virgil have passed through the center of the earth, their perspective changes and Lucifer appears upside-down, with his legs sticking up in the air. Consider the implications of visual parallels between Lucifer and other inhabitants of hell.

Eternally eaten by Lucifer's three mouths are--from left to right-- Brutus, Judas, and Cassius (*Inf.* 34.61-7). **Brutus** and **Cassius**, stuffed feet first in the jaws of Lucifer's black and whitish-yellow faces respectively, are punished in this lowest region for their assassination of Julius Caesar (44 B.C.E.), the founder of the Roman Empire that Dante viewed as an essential part of God's plan for human happiness. Both Brutus and Cassius fought on the side of Pompey in the civil war. However, following Pompey's defeat at Pharsalia in 48 B.C.E., Caesar pardoned them and invested them with high civic offices. Still, Cassius continued to harbor resentment against Caesar's dictatorship and enlisted the aid of Brutus in a conspiracy to kill Caesar and re-establish the republic. They succeeded in assassinating Caesar but their political-military ambitions were soon thwarted by Octavian (later Augustus) and Antony at Philippi (42 B.C.E.): Cassius, defeated by Antony and thinking (wrongly) that

Brutus had been defeated by Octavian, had himself killed by a servant; Brutus indeed lost a subsequent battle and took his life as well. For Dante, Brutus and Cassius' betrayal of Julius Caesar, their benefactor and the world's supreme secular ruler, complements Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus, the Christian man-god, in the Bible. **Judas**, one of the twelve apostles, strikes a deal to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver; he fulfills his treacherous role--foreseen by Jesus at the Last Supper--when he later identifies Jesus to the authorities with a kiss; regretting this betrayal that will lead to Jesus' death, Judas returns the silver and hangs himself (Matthew 26:14-16; 26:21-5; 26:47-9; 27:3-5). Suffering even more than Brutus and Cassius, Dante's Judas is placed head-first inside Lucifer's central mouth, with his back skinned by the devil's claws (*Inf.* 34.58-63). *(Source: http://danteworlds.laits.utexas.edu/circle9.html#lucifer)*